

MY LITTLE SISTER

By EDWARD L. SPENCER

I was brought up in luxury, but without father, mother, brother or sister. When I became six years old and was still kept from going about with other boys nature rebelled against not having playmates, and those who were responsible for me were obliged to make some provision in that direction.

I lived in the house in which I was born, my father having died before and my mother at the time of my birth. I knew nothing about this, being taken care of by a Mrs. Perkins. One day she brought into my playroom a girl about my own age and told me she had a little sister for me. At that age I felt no great surprise as to the existence of a sister, though I remember asking some questions as to why I had never seen her before. I would have preferred a brother, but was nevertheless delighted to be relieved of my loneliness, and from that time forward my life was very different from what it had been.

Lucy was my sister's name, and since we were kept from other children we grew very much attached to each other. I was a very little fellow, while Lucy was of the quiescent kind. She was always soothing me. There was a good deal of the while in me or I might have become effeminate, playing as I did all the while with a girl. I think I did not miss boy associates as much as I would had I not become so much attached to Lucy.

The reason why I was kept so close at home was that my mother, knowing that she must leave me to the care of others, had manifested to Mrs. Perkins, who was to bring me up, a fear that I would learn "badness" from my associates, which she, my mother, would not be with me to counteract. Had it not been for a strong masculine nature in me I would have been spoiled as a result of this motherly timidity. Mrs. Perkins engaged tutors for me and for Lucy as well, and being educated alone, when we were fifteen years old we knew as little about the world as when we had been just brought together.

It was at this time that Lucy and I began to discuss our situation. Why was it that we had no parents like other children? Why had we never met till we were about six years old? These and other similar questions came up for discussion, and we asked Mrs. Perkins for answers to them. But she evaded giving direct answers, and we were no wiser than we were before. All we could get out of her was, "When you come of age you will know all about it."

When I was in my sixteenth year I was sent to boarding school, where I prepared for college. Lucy being sent at the same time to a girls' seminary. I was dreadfully homesick for Lucy, and she wrote me that she suffered the same for me. During my stay at school there was no one to tell me anything about myself more than I knew. Two years after that I went to college, and the period in which I was born over which seemed to hang a veil began to interest me. I was old enough to make an investigation, but when Mrs. Perkins said I would know all about it when I was twenty-one I preferred to wait. One thing especially deterred me, a dread lest I should find out something I would rather not know.

While I was at college Lucy discovered that was being kept from us, but she did not tell me. I came home one vacation during my senior year at college and met her there. I threw my arms about her and kissed her, as I had been accustomed to do at our meetings, and was surprised to see a blush on her cheeks. I wondered at the time what it meant, but it soon passed out of my mind.

However, from this time I noticed a great change in Lucy's treatment of me. She seemed constrained. I was telling her one day of a girl friend of mine who I liked very much. Lucy looked serious. I persisted in sounding my friend's praises, and Lucy suddenly got up to leave the room. I caught her and, pulling her down beside me, told her that she need not fear for my deserting her for a sweetheart or a wife, for I would never marry and did not see how I could bear to have her marry. This seemed to satisfy her, and she smiled at me through her tears.

I was twenty-one years old a month after being graduated from college. A lawyer had notified me that he would call on me on my birthday, and he did so. Lucy and I were both at home. The lawyer said he wished to see us together and told the secret. My past or most of it has been told. Lucy's was as follows:

Her father died when she was two years old and her mother when she was three. Our mothers were sisters enjoying an undivided fortune. They had arranged that we should be brought up together and for each other. The fact of our being kept in ignorance that we were cousins was that in the beginning of our intimacy Mrs. Perkins had told me she had a little sister for me. She thought nothing of it at the time, but put off telling us the truth till we had grown to an age at which she did not like to disabuse our minds. Besides this, she thought the plan of our mothers to unite us when we came of age would be best served by our being kept in ignorance of the truth.

The will of my mother and of Lucy's mother expressed a wish that we should marry.

A Deep Thinker.

The new teacher was somewhat uncertain as to the nationality of her latest charges. She was not kept long in doubt, however. "Yoke," she wrote on the board, then asked in her most musical tones, as she looked graciously round the class, "Can any little boy or girl tell me the meaning of that word?"

A small, blond boy raised his hand. "Yes, know," he said bravely. "It is when you say something funny."

NURSE EELS OF CURES BY CUTICURA

Soap and Ointment in Past 20 Years. Always Recommends Them.

"I have seen the Cuticura Remedies used with best results during the past twenty years. In my work as a nurse, many skin disease cases came under my observation, and in every instance, I always recommended the Cuticura Remedies, as they always gave entire satisfaction. One case in particular was that of a lady friend of mine who, when a child, was afflicted with eczema which covered her face and hands entirely, breaking out at intervals with severe itching. She could not go to school, and the disfigurement looked terrible. I told her to get a set of the Cuticura Remedies. After the use of only one set she was perfectly well."

"A grown lady friend was afflicted with salt rheum in one of her thumbs, and she was cured by the Cuticura Remedies. Still another lady had dry salt rheum in both palms of her hands every fall of the year. They used to be so painful she could scarcely use her hands until she began to use the Cuticura Remedies which cured her. I have known many children of my own friends. The children's faces would be all circles and rings around the cheeks, and the neck, and after treatment with the Cuticura Soap and Ointment, they were completely cured. My husband had rheumatism on his arm and I used the Cuticura Ointment. It made his arm as limber and nice, whereas it was quite stiff before I began to apply the Cuticura."

"Last May I had an ingrowing toe nail which was very painful, as the side of the nail was extending out from the side of my toe. I cut the nail out of the cavity it made, and of course applied the Cuticura Ointment to the part affected. It healed in less than ten days it was all healed through constant use of the ointment. Ten days ago, I had my left hand and wrist burned with boiling lard, and Cuticura Ointment has completely cured them. I have just recommended the Cuticura Remedies to another friend, and she is recovering nicely. I will gladly furnish the names of the people referred to by anybody doubting what I say."

(Signed) Mrs. Margaret Hederson, 77 Highland Ave., Malden, Mass., Oct. 1, 1910.

Cuticura Soap and Ointment sold throughout the world. Send to Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Dept. 416, Boston, for liberal sample of each, post-free, with 32-p. book on the skin.

KISS BREAKS GIRL'S HEAD, NOT HER HEART

"Postoffice" Service Went Wrong and Nearly Ended in a Tragedy.

New York, Feb. 21.—Kisses have broken hearts, pocketbooks, families and friendships, but it remained for Miss Mary Casack of 152 Elm street, Yonkers, to receive a kiss that fractured her skull.

Young Harry Rieches and Miss Casack, who is 17, were guests at a jolly party in the home of Joseph Craft, 23 Main street.

They were playing postoffice, in which a boy and girl are required to kiss one another in a dark room and then come out and blush and be laughed at.

Something went wrong with the "post-office" service, and two girls got into the room at the same time. One of them was Miss May O'Connor. The other was Miss Casack.

Suddenly there was a scream and a fall. The group outside forced the door and found Miss Casack unconscious on the floor, Miss O'Connor hysterical and Rieches half crazy with alarm.

Miss Casack was taken to a hospital but will recover. Nobody seems to know how it happened, but she thinks it was her own fault.

INDICTMENTS FOR REBATING.

Railroads, Theatrical Concerns and Individuals Are Involved.

Chicago, Feb. 21.—Four indictments for alleged rebating were returned yesterday by the federal grand jury, the defendants being three railroad companies, two theatrical concerns and four individuals. Excessive payments for "advertising" in return for the purchase of railroad tickets is declared to be the medium by which the alleged rebating was accomplished.

Those indicted are Harry J. Rhein, general passenger agent of the Cleveland, Chicago & St. Louis railway; William Underwood, assistant general passenger agent of the Michigan Central railway; Rudolph N. Hineck of Cincinnati, director of the Columbia Theatrical Amusement company; James E. Fennessy of Cincinnati, director and secretary of the Empire Circuit company; the Columbia Theatrical Amusement company of New York; the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis railway company; the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern railway; the Michigan Central company; and the Heuck Opera House company of Cincinnati.

WOMAN UNDER BONDS.

Was Arrested in Connection with Shaw Embezzlement Case.

Boston, Feb. 21.—Mrs. George M. Stuart, arrested Monday as an accessory before and after the fact in embezzling the funds of the A. W. Shaw company of Freeport, Me., was given a hearing yesterday before Judge Ely in the municipal court. Upon the recommendation of her counsel, the case was continued until February 27 and bail fixed at \$3,000.

The A. W. Shaw, who disappeared about the time that it was learned that there was a shortage in the accounts of the A. W. Shaw company, is living in Los Angeles under the name of Arthur S. Willis, is the belief of the local police, and an effort will be made to locate him.

Three Beauty Aids Women Should Know

(From French Beauty Monthly.)

"Any woman who wants to have lovely and beautiful hair can do so if she will use a dry shampoo once a week. Just put a cupful of cornmeal in a fruit jar and mix with it an original package of therapy; sprinkle a little on the head, and brush it. It brushes out easily, taking all dirt with it, and leaving the hair clean, bright, wavy and full of life. This treatment causes hair to grow."

"To avoid enlarged pores, dark and discolored blotches, wrinkles, superfluous hairs and blemishes of complexion, stop using fancy cosmetics and apply each morning only the simple lotion made by dissolving an original package of mava-tine in half a pint of witch hazel. Do this, and your complexion soon will be soft, smooth and altogether charming."

"Worry is a beauty destroyer. If there are children in your home, don't borrow trouble, but prepare for emergencies by keeping at hand a jar of Mother's Salve. The mother never saw its equal as a healer of cuts, burns, bruises, sprains and aches. It is splendid for sore throat or croup, too."

HARMON ON EXTRAVAGANCE

He Says Administration Is too Expensive

ESPECIALLY FEDERAL GOVT.

The Poor People Bear the Burden of Taxation—The Governor Addresses the Kentucky Legislature.

Frankfort, Ky., Feb. 21.—Governor James Harmon of Ohio yesterday warned the Kentucky state legislature and all public office holders to analyze their own records to see just how much they were responsible for the unrest that, he said, was making a demand for innovations in government generally. Governor Harmon spoke briefly at yesterday's session in answer to a recent invitation of the legislators. He said in part: "Whatever we may think of the innovations in government we are hearing so much about, it behooves everyone who holds a public position to make diligent self-search to find whether any shortcomings on his part figures in the unrest which the proposal of these changes signifies. Nor, while some doubtless advocate them for other reasons, the greater number would not lend an ear without some real or supposed ground for discontent with public agencies as they are. And it must be noted that all are involved in the measures in question. Direct legislation is aimed at the lawmakers as a body and the recall at the individual members as well as at executive officers and judges. And it may fairly be said that the support these devices receive varies with the real or supposed need of them as well as with opinions about the balance of advantage in them."

Governor Harmon then recounted two of the administration changes that have been effected since his administration in Ohio began, the substitution of a single board of administration for the nineteen state institutions and the adoption of a uniform tax rate. Closing, he said: "I believe the reform most sorely needed now is in administration, better results at less expense. It ought not to cost a billion dollars a year, or over \$11 for each man, woman and child in the country, to maintain the federal government with its limited functions. Those of the state, county and city, which are much more numerous and expensive, cost together but little more per head, and that is far too much."

"True, these are times of private extravagance, but that is no excuse for public extravagance. Everybody may spend his own money as he pleases, but public officials spend other people's money, much of it contributed under hardship and all of it for purposes which make it sacred to every patriot. Federal expenses bear more heavily on the people than state and local expenses, because the latter are raised by taxes on property only, while the former are chiefly raised by the tariff on articles consumed. So the per capita figure is not an estimate, but a reality, because the poor man with a large family pays more federal tax than the rich man with a smaller family. We need other reforms, too, but this would bring quicker, greater, and more general relief than any other. And reduction of the tariff taxes with care and economy in public expenditures which go hand in hand are ready means to secure it."

NOT DYNAMITE.

Bomb Resolution Was a Fire Cracker Joke.

Indianapolis, Feb. 21.—Fire crackers in the hall, not dynamite under non-union steel "jobs," were referred to in a resolution submitted to the convention of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers at Rochester, N. Y., in September, 1910, according to a statement by Frank M. Ryan, president of the association, yesterday.

Ryan yesterday recalled the resolution proposing that "no more bombs or explosives of any kind be exploded while this convention is in session."

"It was just a joke," said Ryan, "and it came about because P. J. Moran of St. Louis had put bunches of fire crackers under the chairs of the delegates and set them off. The explosions startled all of us. The resolution went to the resolutions committee and never was reported out. I suppose John McNamara kept it."

CONVICTED ON DEAD MAN'S WORD

Charles Vitusky Is One of a Gang of Horse Poisoners in New York.

New York, Feb. 21.—Charles Vitusky, one of a gang of horse poisoners which has been working on the East Side, was convicted of attempted extortion on the testimony of a dead man, Louis Blumenthal, a blacksmith. At a preliminary hearing Blumenthal testified that the prisoner offered in return for \$500 to see that no more of his horses were poisoned. Blumenthal notified the police; Vitusky was arrested, and the blacksmith was to have been the principal witness at the trial. He was assassinated, however, by some member of the gang before he could take the stand. But the prosecution succeeded in introducing his testimony as given at the preliminary hearing, and Vitusky was found guilty.

CATARH, ASTHMA, COLDS AND CATARRHAL DEAFNESS QUICKLY GO

Here are some symptoms of catarrh; if you have any of them get rid of them by breathing HYOMEI; it is guaranteed to banish catarrh.

Is your throat raw? Do you sneeze often? Is your breath foul? Are your eyes watery? Do you take cold easily? Is your nose stopped up? Do you have to spit often? Do crusts form in your nose? Are you worse in damp weather? Do you know your nose a great deal? Are you losing your sense of smell? Does your mouth taste bad mornings? Do you have a dull feeling in your head? Do you have a discharge from the nose? Does mucus drip in back of throat? Complete HYOMEI outfit, which includes inhaler, \$1.00 extra bottles, if needed, 50 cents at Red Cross Pharmacy and druggists everywhere.

\$50,000,000 FOR GOOD ROADS.

Ohio Constitutional Convention Adopts Amendment.

Columbus, O., Feb. 21.—The second amendment to the constitution has been adopted by the Ohio constitutional convention, which has been in session since Jan. 10. The amendment permits the state legislature to issue bonds in the sum of \$50,000,000 for the support and maintenance in the country of wagon roads. The amendment was adopted by a vote of 72 to 40.

Light Cake Is Good for Children

Sponge cake, cup cakes, angel cake—all cakes that are not overrich in butter and heavy icings are splendid foods for growing children. Make them from William Tell Flour and you double their food qualities.

Milled only from the finest Ohio Red Winter Wheat by our own special process, making it richest in nutritive value. Your grocer keeps it. Order today.

William Tell Flour

HOWARD BROTHERS, Distributors, South Barre, Vermont.

HUSBAND'S FIST MAKES GREATEST HIT AT THEATRE

Starts Drama of His Own in the Aisle When Wife Comes With Another—Plays Leading Role—Ushers Cause Quick Finale and Playlet Ends at the Police Station.

New York, Feb. 21.—George Schaeffer, big and muscular, made the biggest hit at the American theatre at Forty-Second street and Eighth avenue Monday night, but he did it with his fist when he saw his wife sitting with another man.

Just after the first number on the bill had been begun, Schaeffer saw a well-dressed, happy-looking young woman push her way into the third row in front of him. With her was a young man.

Schaeffer reached for his hat, jammed it down far over his ears, wriggled into his top coat and made for the aisle. Then the man with the woman felt a grip of iron on his collar.

"So you're with my wife, are you?" snarled Schaeffer.

The man was dragged to the aisle and Schaeffer punched him in the jaw. Mrs. Schaeffer screamed. The curtain was lowered and ushers seized Schaeffer and dragged him out, while other ushers swept Mrs. Schaeffer and her escort before them.

All hands were taken to the West Forty-Seventh street police station, where charges of disorderly conduct were lodged against them.

Schaeffer and his wife, Anna, apparently were happy until a year ago, when some quarrel arose. Determined to be independent, Mrs. Schaeffer opened a boardinghouse at No. 321 West Forty-sixth street. Among her boarders was Henry Gebhardt, who Monday night asked the landlady to go to the theatre with him. Gebhardt was the man the angry husband beat and caused to be arrested.

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FOUR DEAD IN WRECK

Trains Crash in Collision in Hoosic Tunnel

EXPRESS RUNS INTO FREIGHT

Seventeen Freight Cars in Flames and Twenty-Four Hours May Elapse Before the Tracks Are Cleared.

North Adams, Mass., Feb. 21.—Two trainmen are dead and two are missing and Hoosic tunnel is so effectively blocked that it may be hours before the tracks are cleared, as the result of a rear-end collision between a freight and a Boston-bound express train last night. The passenger train was not seriously damaged and managed to back away to safety. Several freight cars were demolished and caught fire from the electric engine of the express.

Hours after the crash the fire was still burning, 17 freight cars being in flames, while the volume of smoke and the heat pouring from both ends of the tunnel drove back those seeking entrance.

It is believed the wreck was caused by the brakes of the express failing to work.

The known dead are Engineer Archie L. Simons and Fireman Henry Gregg, both of the express. At midnight railroad officials announced the two missing men were Luther Davis and Reuben Kemp and that they were believed to be dead.

At that time twenty freight cars were burning fiercely, loosening tons of rock which were raining down on the tracks from the tunnel roof. Railroad men said the tunnel might be blocked several days.

MAGAZINE REVIEW

In and Out of Boston.

There is a sign in Boston which reads as follows: "Washing and ironing and going out to work taken in here!"—February Woman's Home Companion.

The Purpose of the Sherman Law.

The purpose of the Sherman law is to compel fair trade, to protect the average business man from injury due to unfair methods of competition. It is meant to keep the highways of commerce open to all, big and little, rich and poor, on the same terms. Therein lies its greatest ethical value. In the contemplation of our wonderful industrial development, the number of small producers who in the past have been forced to the wall by unfair methods has largely been lost sight of.—From Attorney-General Wickardham. "The Enforcement of the Anti-Trust Law" in February Century.

The Emperor's Wife Calls Him "Willy."

In the February Woman's Home Companion there is an intimate personal story of Emperor William's only daughter, Viktoria Luise, in which many new facts are brought out about the emperor and empress of Germany. Following is a brief extract:

"The emperor, in absence of his consort, speaks of her as 'my wife'; the empress in the home circle addresses him as 'Willy.' The former alludes to his family, from the crown prince to the princess, as 'my young ones'; the latter speaks of them not by title, but as 'my children,' both expressions so clearly conveying the close existing attachment.

"Very often the emperor gives evidence of unexpected moments of the ever-present thought with him of his family. At times, when they were small children, and he was being entertained at state banquets as the guest of princes or cities, he would slip bonbons into his pocket, quietly saying, 'These are for the young ones; something brought home always tastes better; I know that from experience.'"

"It is told of the emperor that in Rome, when he was selecting a gown to take home as a present to the empress, a relative advised as choice an elaborate creation, mainly of lace. 'Impossible,' he answered. 'With the children constantly clamoring over her, it would soon be in ribbons.'"

A La Follette Speech That Stopped a Horse Race.

Senator La Follette, writing his autobiography in the February American Magazine, tells some wonderful stories of his six years' struggle with the standard Republican bosses of Wisconsin. When he was running for governor all sorts of efforts were made to interfere with his speeches. Following is a story illustrating the point:

"On the fair grounds at Oshkosh, which was the home of Senator Sawyer, a determined effort was made to stop my address. I was speaking from a farm wagon which had been drawn out to the race track between the pavilion and the judge's stand. I had scarcely gotten under way with my address when the bell in the judge's stand gave the usual signal for starting the horse races. Dozens of uniformed boys distributed through the audience began shouting, 'Score cards for sale; score cards for sale.' This was followed by the appearance of half a dozen or more horses coming on to the track a quarter of a mile away, and headed directly down upon the audience, forcing those standing upon the track to stampede to places of safety. I saw that I must act quickly or lose the day, and throwing off my coat I directed that the wagon in which I was standing be drawn across the race track. Then, turning to the judge's stand, I announced that I was there on the invitation of the association to deliver an address, and that I should not budge from my place until I had finished and, if again interrupted, my address would occupy the balance of the afternoon to the exclusion of any other performance on that race track. I think not fewer than five thousand people stood up and cheered their approval, and I was not again interrupted."

Stiff Neck Relieved

For any stiffness or lameness Sloan's Liniment gives relief at once. It acts like massage—quickens the blood and limbers up lame muscles and joints. When applied immediately after violent exercise it prevents stiffness.

Here's Proof

"I am using your liniment for stiffness. I have bought two bottles of it and it is the best I ever saw."

Mrs. MARY CURRY, Milltown, Ga.
R. D. BURGOYNE, Maysville, Ky.

"I had a severe pain between my shoulders, and noticing your advertisement in the street cars I got a bottle which quickly relieved me."

SLOAN'S LINIMENT

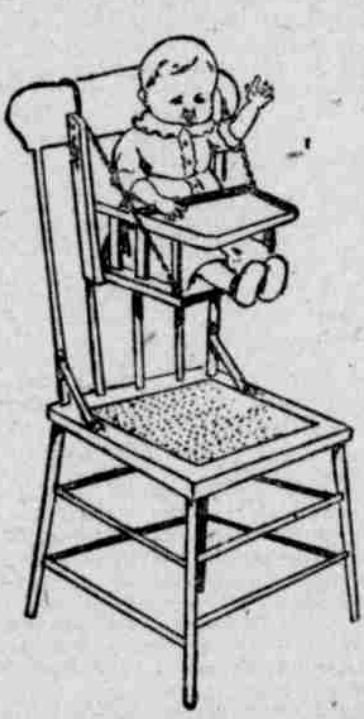
is an excellent antiseptic remedy for sore throat, cuts and bruises. Very penetrating—needs no rubbing. Sold by all dealers.

Price 25c., 50c. and \$1.00.

Sloan's book on Horses, Cattle, Hogs and Poultry sent free. Address DR. EARL S. SLOAN, BOSTON, MASS.

HINTS FOR THE BUSY HOUSEWIFE

Combination High Chair and Swing For the Baby.



The combination high chair and swing here illustrated provides a seat for the baby by merely hanging it on the back of an ordinary dining room or kitchen chair. The seat of the small chair is pivoted to the back, and the sides are pivoted to the seat, so the whole can be folded up flat. Chains run from the outward corners of the seat to the top of the back and hold the former up. Hooks at the top hook over the back of the larger chair. A table is removably fastened on the arms of the baby's chair and answers the double purpose of providing a place for baby's tray and holding the arms in an upright position. This same seat can be used as the seat of a swing by attaching it to chains suspended from ceiling or porch roof.

The Good Wife's Chicken.

This is one of the oldest and most popular ways of cooking chicken in France:

Having tied up the chicken and turned the feet in, surround it with a strip of cooking bacon. Put it in a saucpan with three tablespoonfuls of butter or the same quantity of lard. Take care that the saucpan in which you put the chicken is of a good size. Cover the saucpan and put it on a gentle fire. As soon as the chicken has begun to take a very light brown color surround it with six white onions of medium size and eight potatoes the size of a pigeon's egg. Season it with salt and pepper and continue the cooking at a slow fire for thirty-five to forty minutes. At this point the chicken and vegetables should be well cooked and have taken on a fine rich brown color. Arrange the chicken on a dish and surround it with all the vegetables and keep it warm. Pour three to four tablespoonfuls of hot water in the saucpan, stir it carefully so as to set free all the chicken gravy which may be sticking to the bottom, and when it is all well dissolved pour into this sauce over the chicken.

Spanish Meat Pie.

A slice of ham and a pound of veal cut into inch pieces. When it is nearly cooked in just water enough to cover it pare three medium sized potatoes, slice them into it, season it with pepper; the ham will nearly salt it enough. When it is done thicken with a little flour wet in water. Now line a baking dish with a rich crust and pour in the meat and potatoes. Have ready two hard boiled eggs cut into halves and place on top, then cover with crust. Make a hole on top and bake three-quarters of an hour.

Vegetable Cutlets.

Boil six large potatoes, mash them, add butter, seasoning and enough hot

milk to moisten. Chop fine three but-
ton onions; fry in butter to light brown.
Wash, peel and scrape and boil separately twelve small carrots and four small white turnips. Chop and add with the onions to the potato. Season to taste, add a little minced parsley and cool. Mold into small cutlets, dip in beaten egg, then powdered cracker crumbs. Fry to a golden brown in boiling fat.

Mock Cherry Pie.

Take two cups of cranberries, cut in halves and soak one-half hour in cold water to remove seeds. Stir one tablespoon cornstarch in a little cold water, mix it with one cup of boiling water and boil until thick. Remove from the fire and add the cranberries, a cup of seeded raisins, a tablespoonful of butter, a pinch of salt, a cup of sugar and two teaspoonfuls of vanilla. Line a pie tin with pastry, pour in the filling, cover with crust and bake.

To Clean Baby's Bottle.

Mothers of bottle babies will find a great trouble and time saver in cleaning baby's bottle by the use of the tea leaves left over from teanaking. Simply put the leaves into the bottle with the water and wash as usual. You will find this method superior to anything in cleaning the bottles after the milk has been allowed to stand overnight in them.

BATTLE OF THE KEGS.

A Bloodless Naval Conflict of the Revolutionary War.

All wars have their humors and jokes, and the Revolutionary war was no exception. Jan. 5, 1777, figures in history as the date of the battle of the kegs, and, though bloodless, it has been celebrated in verse. Six months after the Declaration of Independence, while the British fleet was stationed at Philadelphia, the Americans undertook to destroy the ships by means of improvised torpedoes, which, set afloat in the river above the city, were to carry death and destruction among the enemy.

The alleged torpedoes were shaped like kegs, and when the British land forces discovered them floating down the river they were drawn up and ordered to fire on everything that came within range. The officers remembered the Trojan horse and feared every keg might contain an armed rebel. As the kegs came floating down there was great excitement and much firing, but no casualties. The only explosions were from the British guns, for the torpedoes were a failure.

The incident furnished much amusement to the patriots and was cleverly verified by Francis Hopkinson, a prominent lawyer of the day, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the first district judge of Pennsylvania by appointment of Washington. He was one of the most popular writers of the day, and "The Battle of the Kegs" had a great run